

YALE UNIVERSITY
SHEFFIELD SCIENTIFIC SCHOOL

EDMUND W. SINNOTT
DIRECTOR

127 HALL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

June 4, 1947.

Professor R. A. Brink
Department of Genetics
University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Dr. Brink:

Your letter of May 31 with regard to Mr. Joshua Lederburg is at hand. Mr. Lederburg gets his doctor's degree with us next fall after residence of about one and a half years at Yale to which he came from graduate work at Columbia. We regard Lederburg as the most brilliant graduate student we have, and I am inclined to think that in general he is the best man of any student I have known. As you know, he has published a number of important papers which have attracted a good deal of attention. He has complete command of the subject of the genetics of microorganisms and is thoroughly trained in the techniques of this field and in biochemistry generally. We have a number of good students in microbiology, but he stands out above the rest of them not only in his grasp of that field, but in his wide training and interest in other fields of biology. Most microbiologists tend to be rather narrow in their interests and training, but Lederburg knows the whole field of biology in a broad way and did a fine job on his comprehensive examination. As to intellectual ability and promise I can recommend him to you with the warmest enthusiasm.

Lederburg's chief difficulties are personal ones. As you know, he is a Hebrew and during his undergraduate years at Columbia was, I understand, rather insufferable. We have not found him personally objectionable, although when he first came he was inclined to be a little pushful in discussion and sometimes failed to observe all the amenities which most of us value. However, we have noticed a very great change during the time he has been with us and I would ask for no more courteous or personable fellow than he now is. Part of this we are inclined to attribute to the fact that he married a very attractive girl this year who has notably steadied him. I think you would have no problem with him in working with other people. He would contribute a great deal in the way of ideas, and in our seminars he has been distinctly a catalyzer. He has grown in every way in our estimation. The fact remains that he is rather obviously Hebraic and in a community which tended to be anti-Semitic he might have a hard time. Tatum knows the Wisconsin scene very well, however, and feels sure that he would be happy there. Whoever gets him will have a very brilliant investigator.

With best personal regards, I am

Yours very truly,

Edmund W. Sinnott